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Latest technology keeps Ross Complex environmentally friendly

Bonneville Power Administration

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VANCOUVER, Wash. - Protecting the environment will be much easier now that the Bonneville Power Administration is installing the latest fuel storage technology at its Ross Complex in Vancouver, Wash. Three new 10,000-gallon fiberglass fuel storage tanks will replace steel tanks that could leak over time.

"BPA is taking preventative steps to make sure that our equipment is reliable and environmentally safe," said Tony Morrell, an environmental manager at BPA.

The new tanks will hold fuel used to power emergency generators that provide standby or backup electricity to the Dittmer Control Center on the Ross Complex.

BPA is required to comply with the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. The act requires all unprotected or single-walled tanks to be replaced by 1998. "Chronically leaking underground storage tanks have polluted groundwater resources across the country. The current tanks have never leaked and have never caused a problem, but because of Clark County's exclusive reliance on groundwater for drinking water supplies, BPA wants to be especially protective of this resource," said Morrell.

The new tanks are made of fiberglass, which, unlike steel, won't corrode and leak.

They have double walls for containment and have sophisticated volume control and leak detection systems to ensure fuel is not accidentally released into the environment.

The care taken at Ross is evident in design features such as the remote fill station. Since the tanks are located a distance from the road, the remote fill station allows a tanker truck to fill them at the curb. This avoids having to run a long hose to the tanks that could leak as it is being retrieved. "The design features of the tanks, their careful installation and the control systems assure the new tanks will provide a reliable and environmentally safe supply of fuel should it ever be needed in an emergency," said Morrell.

The Ross Complex was deleted from the Environmental Protection Agency's National Priorities Superfund List on Sept. 23, 1996. It was the fourth federal site ever to be removed from the list.

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